

History of NStars

In October 1997, the Exozodiacal Workshop was held at NASA-Ames (proceedings in NASA CP-1998-10155, 1998, edited by D. Backman, L. Caroff, S. Sandford, and D. Wooden; also <http://astrobiology.arc.nasa.gov/workshops/1997/zodiac>).

That workshop was organized to discuss effects of exozodiacal dust clouds on design constraints for the proposed Terrestrial Planet Finder (TPF) space observatory, intended to detect Earth-sized life-bearing planets around nearby stars. The "JPL Book" reference design for TPF (Beichman et al. 1999, JPL Publication 99-3) is pictured here.

A main recommendation of the 1997 Exozodi workshop was development of a master database regarding stars in the solar neighborhood. The NStars Project was begun in April 1998 to produce such a database but also to foster new research on nearby stars, including organizing the Nearby Stars workshop held at NASA-Ames in June 1999.

The NStars Database at NASA-Ames is a major part of the work of the NStars Project. Some research results from the Project are presented in the adjacent poster (113.03, Henry et al.). Both Database and Project are distinct from the joint NSF-NASA NStars funding initiative to support new research on nearby stars.